

PS
2699
.R6
H8
1882

THE
HUNTER OF THE SHAGREEN.

A DESCRIPTIVE POEM.

CLEVELAND:
W. W. WILLIAMS.
1882.

DUKE
UNIVERSITY



LIBRARY

8114

R343

H946

1882

Those under whose notice these lines may fall, will apprehend that they are from the hand of one who cherishes a remembrance of the grand forest which covered the face of the country, and of the lives and times of the pioneers of the Reserve. Their life and its spirit cannot be perpetuated in history, and thus far have found scant space in story and song.

CLEVELAND, OHIO, August 1, 1882.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
VISION	9

PART FIRST.

THINGS IN THE ROUGH.

	PAGE.
I.—The Hunter	10
II.—The Shagreen	13
III.—Indian Spring	17
IV.—Paul Lynn	20
V.—Winter in the Woods	27
VI.—Paul's Find	32
VII.—Nell's Story	42
VIII.—The Departure	52

PART SECOND.

IN THE HANDS OF THE WORKERS.

	PAGE
I.—In the Hands of the Workers	57
II.—Time and Change	61
III.—Spell of the Forest	66
IV.—Nell's Find	71
V.—John Explains	75
VI.—The Whip-poor-will's Song	79
VII.—The Old Hunter	83
VIII.—June Days	88
IX.—Alone	92



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

THE HUNTER OF THE SHAGREEN.

VISION.

Comes a vision of my long lost childhood
Across the furrows of the buried years;
Wide waving green, a wondrous wildwood;
And the cabin near its shade appears;
And sweet there rises on my listening ears,
The plaining voice of my mother, singing
Low murmurous strains, that beguile to tears;
And the laughter of my sister ringing
From that near forest, where the limpid stream,
The first silver thread of the bright Shagreen,
Sparkles o'er its sands through the trees away.
My brothers on its banks I hear at play,
I breathe the fragrance of wild balm and thyme,
I hear the hermit thrush as in that time.

That wood stream itself, hath become a dream,
Born of limpid springs, themselves forest born,
Save in mem'ry, it doth no longer gleam;
Part of the wood, it perished with its charm.
Yet I can see it still, a shining band,
Around a sloping cape of maples grand,
The sweetest bit of wild, of all wood land.
That a sanctuary was—a retreat,
Where in those years oft strayed my boyish feet;
My tender nature steeped in solitude,
Did there imbibe the spirit of the wood;
Whose lights and shadows still around me play,
With the cherished dreams of that brighter day;
Which o'er this page sheds something of its ray.

PART FIRST.

THINGS IN THE ROUGH.

I.

THE HUNTER.

An old man tall and gaunt,
Of visage gray and grim,
Gray eyes set wide and deep,
Of giant mold and limb—
Strong and lithe in youth,
His childhood reached to age:
His school the deep greenwood,
The forest leaf his page.

Learned in all wood craft,
Wise, cunning in the lore
Taught in the desert wild,
By sky, by stream, by shore.
More cunning than the red fox,
Knowing more than red-man art,
Deep and grave in counsel,
And still a child in heart.

Beyond the farthest march
Of the westward moving host,
Whose wave advanced, retreated,
Oft broken, never lost,
His father, his mother,
His brothers, one by one,
In the great wood laid down
And with him there were none.

With St. Clair he battled
Against the Indian host,
Where girt with blood and fire
He fought till all was lost.
His rifle at the Rapids,
Spoke sharpest under Wayne,
Where Turtle and his bands
Were shattered, routed, slain.

In the later time of blood,
When Tecumtha and his band,
Proctor and his redcoats,
Were ravaging the land;
His rifle in his hand,
The bravest there he stood,
Not behind the fort walls,
But in the outer wood.

He and his fellows met
Tecumtha in the fight,
Scourging them so sorely,
They stole away in flight;
Away to far Thames bank,
River of their own land,

Where Tecumtha and Proctor
Made their last battle stand.

The redcoats stood a minute,
But Proctor fled before; -
The rifles dashed through them,
Where they fought on the shore.
Our hunters met Tecumtha,
Who raised his savage yell;
Maintaining fiercest battle,
And fiercest fighting fell.

THE SHAGREEN.

II.

The loveliest of rivers
Was crystal Shagreen.
There the light ever quivers
In silvery gleam
On her face in bright shivers
With shadow and sheen.

She gathers her water
From fair wooded hills,
Herself the bright daughter
Of springs and pure rills.
In cascades they leap to her,
From rocks they dash down;
No stagnant pools creep to her
With stains for her crown.

No dam stayed her current,
No marsh marred her side,
No bridge spanned her torrent,
No mill claimed her tide.
The barge of the trader
To her was unknown;
Nor had the invader
Yet made her his own.

Through a fair valley, turning, winding,
Winding, turning, trending to the north
The bright river flows; flowing, finding
New beauty, loveliness new, as forth
Her rapid shining way she takes
To Erie wide, stormiest of lakes.

And ever in her lovely valley,
Opening from the lake-sea south;
There first the sunshine loves to dally,
And the air soft comes, as from the mouth
Of summer; and through the teeming land
By her marge, along the valley's side,
Spring hastens to lead forth her band
Of flowers, flooding with her tide
Of color, fragrance; flowing on
To summer, which there tarries long.

Luxuriant there the ox-balm grew,
Burdening the warm air of noon
With fragrance. Wild roses took the dew
Giving odor to the breeze of June;
And there the clematis twining threw
White along the bank her fringes bloom.
All summer's children, mints, and wild thyme,
Sunflowers, and yellow celandine.

There through the long day's lazy hours
Came the drowsy drone of lab'ring bees;
On flashing wing among the flowers
Went humming-birds; and mid sheltering leaves
Rained notes of song bird, gushing showers
Of music on odor-laden breeze;

Through the vale, in every nook and dell
Some bright-winged, sweet-throated thing did dwell.

In the far off earliest of time,
Ere the white man's foot impressed the land,
All wood-haunting things, each in its kind,
Fearless came to the bright river's strand;
The tender ones knowing when to find
It free from peril of prowling band.
Boldly came the graceful doe to drink,
By her side her fawn, led to the brink.

All the red hunters wandering wide,
That fair valley saw with longing eyes;
Envyng such as might there abide;
Deeming it an earthly paradise;
With wigwam, canoe in which to glide
O'er the river bright 'neath summer skies,
Teeming earth, sun, stream, rare hunting-ground,
Fish, game, ease, where plenty did abound.

The warrrior there his wigwam set,
His squaw secure reared her beans and corn,
And pappoose. The dusky maiden met
Her lover, while yet the sky was warm;
Just as the flowers with dew were wet
And twilight lent her weird charm;
And from the thicket the whip-poor-will
Sent forth his note's mysterious thrill.

Ere the war the red men stole away;
The vale was a human solitude;
Camps deserted, in the sunshine lay,
Empty and silent the wigwams stood.

The sand bore no print of Indian foot;

There on the strand lay his unused boat;

Nor hunter, nor squaw, or Indian child,

Ever saw again that valley wild.

III.

INDIAN SPRING.

There is a lovely Indian spring,
Where one would gladly sit and sing
In the shade an idle song
Through the hours the live day long.
Itself the thing hath taught to bring
Its waters with sweet murmuring,
With sad'ning notes that do complain.
And mingled is a mirthful strain,
As from the cave its waters run
From darkness to the morning sun,
In ripples bright to golden day,
With their soft, liquid voices,
Leaping on their shining way,
To the broad and flowing river,
Where the sunbeams dance and quiver
And all the valley bright rejoices.
There lay the Indian woman's field,
Whose generous soil made ample yield
To tillage scant; and there still twine
Her gourds, and there her wild grapes climb
And ripen their dewy clusters
In azure and blooming lustres.
On elm the golden oriole,
From pensile bough her woven nest

Hangs in the sun, and there the soul
Of her mate floats down to her breast
In pearl-like notes. There comes the gush
From the throat of the hermit thrush.
When he sings the wild woods hush.
Here to this favored, lovely spot,
Our hunter came and reared his cot.
Tecumtha slain, the land had rest
In all the cabins of the West.
East, south, southwest, the battle burned,
But to our woods robed Peace returned.
In their shade for many a year,
The hunter scout pursued the deer,
Hunted the prowling hermit bear,
The coward wolf slew in his lair,
Trapped the otter, trapped the beaver,
Speared the muskallonge in the river,
Shot the swan and shot the loon,
Killed the wild goose on the wing,
Slew wild-cats and fierce panthers,
Tapped the maples in the spring.
There our fathers found him
And built their cabins round him.
Their axes, the falling trees,
Sorely did confound him.
They frightened all the wild things,
His companions only.
The men there in the greenwood
Made him sad and lonely.
An ax was greater terror
Than tomahawk in hand,
And choppers were more fearful
Than a hostile savage band.

He started in the forest,
 When 'neath the ax there fell
A tree, more than once he did
 To hear the Indian yell.
The smoke of settler's cabin
 Sore troub'ed his old brain;
From his opening in the wood
 He fled away in pain.
Ever and ever going,
 Forever to the West
The living tide was flowing.
 And never would it rest;
He, never could escape it,
 And never more be blest.

PAUL LYNN.

There came one day into the wood
A stranger youth, of bearing high,
Just out of school; of lineage good,
A smiling lip, a laughing eye;
Showing him not of churlish blood;
Sparkling gay like spring-blue sky,
And something of the uncommon,
Alike pleasing man and woman.

Broad-shouldered, tall, and lithely formed;
Straight, round, and slender in the flank,
His upper lip not yet adorned
By the gods with beard. Manly, frank,
Nor mental gifts had nature scorned
To give; nor spirit bold, which shrank
From aught. Since red men fled the wood
In its shade no such form had stood.

He came with springy step and free,
With rifle armed, of latest make,
To seek beneath the greenwood tree,
The elk, panther, whate'er doth take
Cover there; and, as one could see,
His was the spirit that would stake,
On venture rash, howe'er it rose,
And laughing turn to face all foes.

In hunter's ways he had no skill,
Wood-craft to him an art unknown.
Quick eye, true hand, and steady will,
Patience and hope, were all his own.
Some man he queried for to fill
The place of mentor, and was shown
The way to the old hunter's cot,
As of all men the man he sought.

The hunter old of the Shagreen,
Named Stead—"hunter," "trapper," "Scout Stead"
Called by men. The youth straight to him
Through the valley journeyed, and said,
In manly way—"I am Paul Lynn,
Come from the East, and I am led
To seek a place by your side, till
Something I learn of hunter's skill."

The old man stood at his cot door,
Where western trees screened ont the sun;
Heard Paul amazed, as him before
Stood the young man. So bright an one
He had not seen, and o'er and o'er
He scanned him. Down the valley lone
He turned his eyes, as if he sought
Some missing thing, and stood in thought.

"Paul Lynn, you said?" "Yes, Paul Lynn."
To him the hunter—"My sister's son,
Died 'fore you was born. So like him,—
I tho't 'twas 'is ghost. Yit that one
Was dark. The chance is purty slim
For game, young man. Sence the folks cum

Somehow the river seemed to tie me,
So I let 'em scatter by me."

Paul smiled to hear the old man talk,
Knowing 'twas five miles to the door
Nearest him. A much longer walk
To the next one; yet o'er and o'er
He mourned them, as is they did balk
Him of life. Much he did deplore
The falling tree, so far away,
Which thus let in the upper day.

The woods had ceased to be a home,
He should go forth, always fearing,
Far from the river now to roam;
Would lose him in smoky clearing;
All the wild things were making moan
That the pressing feet were nearing
Their deepest haunts, and the axe's blow
Was laying all the wild wood low.

E'en at the Cuyahoga's mouth
Near, men were building a city,
To leave this valley he was loth,
Surely 't was a monstrous pity,
But since Paul came they could both
Go farther West. There his ditty
Ended. There was the Sandusky
And farther on the bright Maumee.

Paul's rifle took the old man's eye,
So very funny seemed the lock.
He wanted the young man should try
Its force, and showed to him a hawk,

Sitting against the bright, blue sky,
Beyond rifle range, the old man thought.
Paul raised his rifle where he stood;
An instant it rang through the wood.

Wondering, the old man raised his hand;
Such feat of rifle could no one tell.
Sure as on earth his feet did stand
From off his perch the fish hawk fell,
Ere the rifle-crack. In the land
Was ne'er a thing so wondrous well.
Long in amaze the old man stood,
Quest'ning if this could be made good.

Looking over the river's brim
At distance on the farther side,
He saw a single "dipper" swim—
Dippers all flint-lock guns deride—
"I'd like to see ye try't on him,"
Incredulous the old man cried;
And at his words outspread its wing
On the river, a lifeless thing.

"Well, well," the old man said;
"I an' ole shell-bark may be laid
Aside to die and rust. No Stead
E'er saw the likes o' that." He made
The youth welcome to all he had
In the world. "O we will make head
'Gainst these new times. I'm real glad,
That int' the thinin' woods you come;
An' you so like dead Nancy's son.

But that 'are rifle'—There he stopt.

Words had no power to express
His wonder; nor had yet his thought
Full form. This youth had come to bless
His later years. He came unsought,
He and his gun, in his distress,
When the noisy settlers did invade,
His forest sanctuary and shade.

Many a long and wand'ring raid,
'Neath arches of the forest wide,
Were by the active hunters made;
And often was the rifle tried
On bears, and deer; whatever strayed
On hill, or plain, or river's side,
That came within the younger eye
And rifle range, was sure to die.

But not so quick of trapper's art—
Conceal his hand, lay hidden snare,
Allure, decoy, not his the part,
But track a panther to his lair.
Strong hand and quick, and bold of heart
To face a prowling wolf or bear,
And strike them in fair open fight,
His nature was, and his delight.

And daily as the year grew wan,
And nightly by the cabin fire,
As more he saw the borderman
The younger loved and did admire.

His fame through all the forest ran,
And thanks were his, as without hire
The game he slew, where cabins stand,
He laughing gave with open hand.

In the valley warm the autumn lay,
Its golden steps were in the trees,
The eve of summer was the day,
And in her arms the passing breeze,
Bore from the trees their leaves away,
And still was heard the hum of bees.
And smiling ran the dimpling river,
Rippling in the sun as ever.

Millions countless, on tireless wing,
Of pigeons, darkening morning air,
Came in clouds, themselves to fling
In storms, through all the forest, where
The beech-nuts dropped. Each gen'rous pair
With them their stout-grown offspring bring;
In smothered thunder they rise in flight,
And wing to rest through coming night.

The river's breast still floats the swan
In stately fleets. The wild goose there
Swims secure, and still at dawn
The splendid buck comes with the deer,
His doe, by her a dappled fawn,
To drink the water cool and clear,
Browse on the herbage rank and sweet,
And print the earth with dainty feet.

The thickets from, the mother bear
Leads her cubs, to the bottom-land,

Where the wild plum tree golden fair
Ripens its fruit. The wolf his band
Trains for the hunt, and snuffs the air,
Teaching the young to run or stand.
All through the wood each thing with life
Makes ready for the winter's strife.

Long time dwelt in the young man's mind
Memory of the wondrous days
When a pupil he learned to find,
Of forest life the pleasant ways;
The ways of beasts of every kind,
And how to thread the wildest maze,
In all this lore a student apt,
With eager heart and soul enrapt.

Few excelled Paul Lynn on shore,
None on the river's swelling tide,
Fish spear, Indian paddle, oar
The bark canoe to drive, and guide
Whatever craft the flood up bore;
To dart into the flashing side
Of muskallonge, the shining spear,
Few men could boast themselves his peer.

WINTER IN THE WOODS.

When winter set his frozen reign
Triumphant o'er the conquered world,
And through the forest shone a plain
Of gleaming white; and southward hurled
His ice spears, when the flowers slain
Lay hidden 'neath his flag unfurled,
Then binding on the Indian shoe,
Paul traversed the wide realm of snow.

Saw Cleveland, Erie's future queen,
And Painesville on her river Grand;
And every cabin where a gleam
Of light shone out, in all that land.
With his rifle he oft was seen
And sometimes 'twas an ashen wand
He bore, as through the forest glades
He passed upon his sylvan raids.

Well armed he made a famous drive
'Gainst elk, pushing them in flight,
Through all the day, nor ceased at eve,
He harried them through all the night.
A noble herd—twenty and five,
All might he slay, but in his sight
They looked pitiful, so for food
He chose—children hungered in the wood.

The elder hunter kept the traps,
Cured pelts, kept the hut, when Paul
His degree had taken. When haps
Befell he strode out, helped to haul
In the slain, filling up the gaps
With pipe, sleep, tale of border brawl,
St. Clair and Wayne; of frontier life,
Indian forage, and scouting strife.

The old man had power to spin
A tale with all the magic charm
Of minstrel old; so thought Paul Lynn.
Simple, direct, taking a form
Rhythmic—poetic. It could win
Him ever, as th'old man grew warm
In legend quaint, of other time,
Having of eld its touch of rime.

Strange though it seem, the old man had
A Bible, soiled, and smoked, and worn;
His one book cherished. It was sad
His love for it, battered and torn;
The dearest thing to make him glad,
Treasure through all his wand'rings borne,
Tho' no word had he ever read,
Nor his father, nor brothers dead.

The Bible was his mother's book.
She died full fifty years ago.
She read it; the old man's voice shook
When he told Paul of her, and so
Did Nancy's son. Paul Lynn took
The long unread book, turned unto
The first yellow page, smoked and old,
And told word by word all its gold;

From the great—"In the beginning,
God made the heavens and earth"—
The wondrous tale. All the sinning,
And wandring, since man had birth
The chosen were forever bringing
On their own heads and children, dearth
Of evil doing. The rapt man
Heard, heard eager, as the story ran.

To him it was a story new,
And came as new from God's finger.
No doubt troubled, all was true;
Over portions he would linger,
And asked young Paul to shed the dew
Of comment; become a bringer
Of light. So trusting the young head.
Paul asked himself for light to lead.

'Twas strange, this boast of his college
Going into that forest wild;
Giving yet receiving knowledge,
From this grand old untutored child,
Whose heart and nature in the foliage
Of the woods, like Adam's ere beguiled.
Arose responsive to the light,
Seeking a hand to lead him right.

As on and on the lesson went,
Oft untouched his traps he left.
List'ning—ever his heart intent,
On the great word; his soul bereft
Of other thought, his old head bent,
To catch each word. The night was cleft,
And through the night as through the day
He harkened, nor cared to turn away.

Of all the book the latest strain
The tale of Mary's blessed son—
How he bro't to the world again
Life and hope; he, the chosen one,
Took the old man's heart. His soul long lain
In darkness, uprose. When 'twas done
That soul went forth in the new light,
Secure from out its ancient night.

The long cold winter went at last,
Gathered his ice spears, hied him north
Over frozen Erie. His blast
Changed to a softened breeze, and forth
The high sun from his south did cast
His kindling rays o'er all the earth,
Calling the streams to wake in mirth,
And life renewing had its birth.

And one by one the happy hills
Threw off the white, looked forth and laughed;
Their covers ran in leaping rills,
From all the cabins children quaffed
The sunshine, heard the robin's thrills,
The bluebird's notes, and felt the waft
Of the south wind; and men did light
In the maple woods camp fires bright.

In the wide world of wood and stream,
Came new forces with a gush;
O'er the pasture lands flashed the sheen
Of verdure new; and warm and lush
Come the south rain. Then the Shagreen
Burst her fetters, and with a rush
Bore them from her valley warming,
Where new growths with life were forming.

Marching March marched himself away,
The soft'ning skies of April lay
On the Shagreen the vernal charm
'Neath which her limped waters swarm
Her face with ev'ry bird that swims;
Her depths with all that oar with fins;
There the great sturgeon made his way,
In schools the pike and mullet play.

The muskallonge, the suckers small
All upward oaring, each and all
Eager searching where may be found
Instinctively for natal ground;
Oft pausing, turning to the shore,
All the small branches they explore,
Where e're shoal water, sand, and sun
Give opening, they are sure to run.

PAUL'S FIND.

When the twilight deepened
To darkness in the wood,
At the river's side Paul his boat untied,
And rowed it o'er the flood.

On the jack at the prow,
Burnt a torch bright and free,
A spear in his hand he took from the land
And all alone went he.

He rowed against the tide,
He rowed him to the south,
His torch's light lit up the night,
He rowed him to the mouth

Of rippling Sandy Creek,
Fully two miles or more,
And there he landed, his boat he stranded,
And stepped upon the shore.

He stood upon the shore;
The night was dark and chill
Under the trees, and save the breeze
The wood was hushed and still.

A flaming torch he took
Of crackling hick'ry bark,
And on the land, with spear in hand,
He stood a shining mark.

Up the creek he took a step,
Steps he took but three,
When by the light the strangest sight
That ever was, saw he.

A maiden passing fair
Reclined against a tree;
Upon the ground in sleep profound
Or in a swoon was she,

Sure never did it hap
To errant youth before,
Standing all bright in torch's light,
To find upon the shore

A maiden peerless sleeping
In the wild wood alone;
Her dooping head 'gainst elm tree laid,
That o'er her sheltering stood.

Its stalwart broad high feet,
It reached out her around,
As if to bless, hold, and caress;
There her the young man found.

He stood in great amaze,
In wonder there he stood;
His torch's gleam lit up the stream,
And border of the wood.

Sure it must be a dream,
Of sleep a vision bright;
He cast his eye up in the sky,
And turned him from the light.

He looked into the sky,
The stars, up through the leaves,
Where on the river the light did quiver,
And at the darksome trees.

Then at the maiden sleeping,
There in the savage wild,
Of years fifteen, sure ne'er was seen
Such sweet and winsome child.

Some sad and sore mischance
Had led her feet astray,
In the wild wood where beast of blood
Might rend her life away.

Scarce was she past childhood,
Scarce touching fifteen years;
And on her face were traces
Of undried, unwiped tears.
Scanty seemed the garments
To save her tender body
From the chilliness of April,
The coldness of the ground.
“O, pitiful, most pitiful,”
Said the young man, Paul Lynn;
“Some sorry, sad disaster,
A sore misadventure
Hath led her feet astray;
Alone in the great forest,
The awful wild wood savage,
In the chill night alone,
The dark and earless night,
To wander lost, bewildered,
Till weary and overcome

She sank in fatal slumber,
Here by the dark river,
Left in fearful keeping
Of the wild things of the wood.
Prowling wolf, nor panther
Hath power her to harm.
Una in her whiteness,
Was guarded by a lion.
Bless the precious Father
That worthy I am held;
That I have been hither,
Led to become her cheer,
For God's love to save her."
He dropped his shining spear,
On an old, moss-grown log
The blazing torch he placed.
Tenderly drew nigh her,
Reverently knelt by her,
As if her grace seeking.
Heard the murmur of her lips,
The moaning in her sleep.
Restlessly she turned her,
As suffering in her sleep,
Turned, and her eyes opened,
Her dark and wondrous eyes,
Looked around with surprise
Into eyes that met hers,
Reached him her small browned hand,
As instant him she trusted.
"O, I dreamed of my mother,
Of the blessed Lord Jesus,
And you they sent to me,

To save me, sent you here.
O, I am so—so glad!
I tho't that I should die.
I was lost! I was lost!
And you they sent to me.
I am so glad! so, so glad!"
Tears gushing from her eyes.
He gently her lifted,
And tenderly supported.
Chilled, benumbed, o'er wearied,
She could not stand unaided,
And further she explained:
"I went to the sugar camp
Of my uncle Gilbert,
And when I would return,
Following the creek up
It ran the other way.
So I went the wrong way,
Went from my home away,
Went and went and never
Came I to our cabin;
But wandered like the children
In the pitiful old story,
I, a great foolish baby."
Here came a flood of tears.
"I called and called; none heard me.
Dared not call very loud—
The dark night hath no ears,
Is huge and full of darkness
Filled with trees, filled with brooks.
I cried, none came to me;
And on and on I wandered,

Keeping ever by the creek;
Praying God and Jesus,
Calling my dead mother
Till I came to this river,
Cold and dark and awful,
It sent through me a chill,
When in a swoon I fell.
I woke chilled and hopeless,
Dragged me to this old tree,
Old tree strong and lovely,
And laid me down to die.
I pulled my skirts round me,
And said, Now I lay me
Down to die." She was o'er come;
Stood trembling with a chill
In the arms of Paul Lynn,
Who shed tears as she did.
"Gilbert, That's miles away.
We will go to Indian Spring;
There's an old hunter there,
Will give you warm shelter."
"O, you're Paul Lynn," she said,
And as she could not walk
He took her in his arms,
And bore her to his boat.
There he had a huge robe—
A bear's skin the center
Set round with pelts of wolves,
Sable-trimmed, lined with fur.
He had oft slept in it
Bedded in the dry snow.
Her enveloped in it,
Soft in the boat he laid,

His own cap of otter
Placed on her shining head,
Which rested on the gunwale.
With his prow turned northward
He sent the little shallop
Flashing down the river,
Frightening the muskrats,
Sending down the torch-light
Into the crystal waters,
Scaring the muscallonge,
Making the huge sturgeons
Turn their filmy fish eyes
Upward to the flashing
Torch-light, and the oar-blades.
The maiden in her fur robe,
With Warmth returning to her,
In a pleasant drowse lay,
Her head 'gainst the gunwale;
Her eyes unwinking, half closed,
Saw things gliding past her;
Saw over her the bright stars;
Saw the trees come out in light,
And fly into the dark night;
Heard the geese in the river,
As in fear the wild things shy,
Got on wing, with much plashing;
Heard the note of boding owl,
Heard the howling of the wolves,
Nor knew of that the portent.
There was peace in her child heart,
And rest in her weary limbs;
The fright was past, the horror
Had died out from her heart;

Christ had watched over her,
She was foolish to be scart.
He had sent this lovely being,
Strong and brave, to save her;
And whether man or woman,
She did not think or care.
She had heard of the old scout.
The name of the young hunter,
And knew that this was him.
When they reached the landing
She heard him call the old man,
Knew Paul took her in his arms,
Her head upon his shoulder,
And bore her into the hut.
There at once she brightened,
With her senses all awake.
Could you have seen the wonder
In the old hunter's eyes,
When within the full light
He saw this maiden bright;
Had she been an Indian,
A nymph of the green wood.
A thing of air celestial,
Not of earth, immortal,
Of dreamland a vision—
Of these, had she been either,
He'd not been more astonished.
They placed her by the fire,
On a seat, with down cushioned,
As she had been a princess;
And all their store of dainties
They set profuse before her,
And left to her to choose.

No nymph of poets singing,
No maid of lover's fancy,
Ever made such havoc
As now, this maid of fifteen;
This precious rescued damsel,
And ne'er was love so happy
To see the loved one feast,
As was now blessed Paul Lynn,
To see his willing pris'ner.
Then the older hunter,
His moccasins adjusted,
Drew his belt tighter round him,
Pushed off into the night,
The starry night and chill,
Through the darkened forest,
To tell the uncle Gilbert
Of the maiden's rescue.
Stoutly Paul insisted
That should be his mission.
Stead more stout resisted
And pushed off through the wold.
Paul mustered all his blankets,
The canvas of his sail-boat,
And formed a cunning chamber,
And within, a little cot,
With a mattress of fine hay,
Fragrant and perfuméd,
And on it the fur robe,
And there the tender maiden
Laid herself in slumber,—
Sleep blissful, after saying
The prayer her mother taught her.
Who can tell of the emotion,

The gratitude and wonder
That stirred the soul Paul Lynn
As he thought it all over;
How he came to go that night,
Go out upon the river,
Go up to Sandy creek,
And land upon that shore,
And find there this maiden—
This rare and lovely maiden,
E'er ill could come to her.
And then he knelt him down
Upon the cabin floor,
And his joy and thankfulness
To God he did outpour.

VII.

NELL'S STORY.

When the notes of the Oriole
Came down from the tree,
Forth tripped the merry maiden
O'er the flowery lea,
As beautiful as an earth-born
Damsel e'er could be.

She ran out to the Indian spring,
Bathed her hands and face;
And turned she then to Paul Lynn,
Saying with child grace—
Answering question of her name
Dimples in her face.
“I am called Ellen Maynard,
And Puritan my race.”

If he last night had wondered
At her loveliness there,
This morning as she greeted him,
The sun-rays in her hair,
Her heavy hair of fine-spun gold,
Complexion lily fair;
Her supple form was round, and tall,
Winsome her girlish air;
Sure on land, or in poet's dream,
Was ever maid so rare.

She warbled like the oriole,
Her notes as rich and glad,
And for her gush of melody
The same good reason had,
A well of music in her soul.
Her heart it had been sad,
Had she not sung as birds sing,
In gush of happy words;
In twitt'ring notes in sparkling play,
As do the happy birds.

She ran down to the river glad,
Then ran back to the spring,
Where Paul asked her to tell him more
Of the unhappy thing,
That happened on the day before;
And sent her wandering.
She paused a moment in her glee,
As bird prepares to sing,
And thus it was her story ran,
In pleasant murmuring.

“ All the maple trees were running,
And the honey bees were humming,
And the pleasant breeze was coming,
Everything was just as cunning
As cunning can be.

“ The little streams were flowing,
The little flowers blowing,
And all the sky was glowing,
And I was running, going,
Everything to see.

" All round the woods were ringing,
And everything was singing,
Life, hope, and joy were springing,
And the happy days were bringing,
A wonder and a charm.

" The butterflies were flying,
Their wings with flowers vieing,
The zephyrs soft were sighing,
The earth all bright was lying
In colors glad and warm.

" As for me, I went tripping,
I could not walk for skipping,
And ever I was flitting,
And constantly was sipping
The syrup sweet and warm.

So bright, so short the day did seem
It flashed away, as silver sheen
It came to be mid afternoon,
Ere one short hour had come and gone;
And then I was to start for home.
Our cabin stood just up the creek,
And on its banks so bright and thick
Grew buttercups as sweet and warm;
And other flowers lent their charm;
I never thought of any harm,
In walking home on its sweet banks,
On which the tall trees stood in ranks.
I sauntered to the shining stream,
Plucking flowers amid the green,
And when on its bank I stood,
And gazed into its rippling flood,

It seemed to run the other way.
As I said, not from, but toward home.
I tho't 'twas strange, but did not stay
To think, but went hurrying on,
Not up the creek, but by it, down;
Plucking the flowers as I went;
Picking, culling, only intent
Not to wander from the stream,
With no thought I could be wrong,
But onward went as in a dream
The shining waters' banks along.
So bright they sparkled in the sun,
I turned to see the shadows play
On its current, where it run
Rippling in the fading ray
Of the slowly parting light;
And I noticed that the day
Was almost done, and the night
Was making in the dusky wood.
Around me was but solitude;
Surely I was almost home !
Then I walked fast, and then I ran;
Ran until I was out of breath,
But still I hurried, hurried on.
I was scared almost to death,
As I thought I might be wrong.
I tried to think—that was the way;
I dared not turn me and go back.
If I had, and kept on the track,
I would not then have gone astray.
But I was lost, bewildered, lost,
So madly lost the creek I crost;
Yet wandered ever, ever down,

Further and further from my home.
Wearied I grew, but did not stop,
But hurried faster on and on;
My breath came hard, my head was hot;
Wild things ran past, I heeded not;
I tore my clothes, I tore my hands;
My poor feet were wet and cold;
I cried in sobs, I was not bold
Enough to shriek, or loudly call.
And if I had 'twould so befall
In all the savage forest lands
There were not but prowling bands
To hear me. Weary, scarce could stand,
And all around me came the night,
I scarce could catch a gleam of light;
I kept near the running stream;
Its murmur heard, as in a dream,
And still I urged my weary feet
Till I came on this bright river,
So shining now, then black and deep,
It gave me a mortal shiver;
And, as I said, right down I sank,
Right there upon the lonely bank."
She ceased, nor could repress her tears,
At memory of her woes and fears,
And Paul, weeping, by her stood,
In sympathy; when from the wood
To them the old hunter strode.
The tale he told made Ellen weep;
Her folly bitterly did she chide,
That it had caused distress so deep
To those who love and home supplied;
Since in childhood she was reft

Of parents, and an orphan left.
Her uncle thought she had reached home,
And there the ever careful aunt,
As home the maiden did not come,
Supposed she lingered at the camp;
And it was far into the night
When they learned, with sore affright,
She was not at their neighbor's door,
But alone in the awful wood,
With prowling beasts. That hap no more
The fair, bright one who long had stood
Their child, would see the morning light
Unless they snatched her from the night.
They fired guns, and sounded horns,
And rushed into the forest wild;
Lit great fires; made loud alarms,
And frantic called the wand'ing child;
More beacons lit, made more acclaim,
But lights and sounds alike were vain.
Then as in a great despair,
 Silent they in darkness stood,
Risen from the outbreathed prayer,
 All that was left; when from the wood
Came hunter Stead, with flying feet,
God's messenger with answer sweet.
None e're have seen the dead arise,
None have met the shining feet
 Of God's bright ones down from the skies—
As such the old man they did greet.
 With rapture wild his story heard,
 And as from God received his word.
'Twas very rare that hunter Stead
 Was in a settler's cabin seen,

Nor rested there his gray old head,

Tho' often in the forest green.

But there reluctant through the night,

And went when came morning light.

His last words— "Ere the rising sun

Shall climb the brightest hill of noon,

Paul Lynn will bring the rescued one

To you, bright as when lost her bloom."

Then through the wood with hunter's stride,

To Indian spring the old man hied.

It was by its lisping well

The hunter told his tale to Nell.

The wierd thing had kept her near,

Its liquid notes had charmed her ear.

And listening to their murmuring

She declared there were two voices:

A tale of sorrow one doth sing,

And one in low mirth rejoices.

As thus she spoke of glee and wail,

Stead told her an old Indian tale

Which he from a red hunter had;

A story of a woman, sad,

A little, simple, touching thing,

A legend of that lisping spring.

I may not now the story tell

As 'twas told that morn to Nell.

'Twas all about a warrior's wife,

Who in the forest with her child,

Found him there bereft of life;

Her anguish wails in accents wild,

Then turns to soothe the tender babe,

That answers her with child mirth glad.

Their voices ever haunt the spring,

Ever and ever murm'ring.
The hunter that his thirst would stint
And stoops the crystal spring to quaff,
Ever hears the mother's plaint,
Ever hears the pappoose laugh.
The story Paul could hardly wait—
That morning's meal was in his wish.
The hunter shy could hardly eat,
By Ellen's side, his breakfast dish.
Excuse he made to leave his seat
And dainty smoking broiled fish
And fragrant coffee. To their fare
He left the lovely hungry pair.
The old man drew upon the shore
His largest boat—made all complete;
In oarlock placed each ashen oar;
That famous robe spread o'er the seat;
And when the pair, their repast done,
Came laughing out in morning sun,
He called them to the shining tide,
And o'er the little shallop's side
Paul Ellen helped to her own place,
And seated so her laughing face
Was brightly to the boatman turned,
Whose iron arm the water spurned.
Paul at her feet a place did find,
And 'gainst the gunwale sat reclined,
Where he might also share the grace
Of gazing on her lovely face.
Unconscious of their pleasure she
As simple child could ever be.
He was so brave and she so fair,
As in his eyes he held the pair,

'Twas given the old man to see
The thing between them that should be.
That wondrous thing, that could not fade,
That in their souls should never die,
That when their forms in dust were laid
Would brightly shine in upper sky.
Of this naught came to Paul Lynn's thought,
And nothing to the simple child;
His eyes her face contented sought.
From shining stream, she to the wild
Wooded banks, turned her laughing eyes,
Greeted each bend with new surprise.
Sure never had the glad Shagreen,
Upon her sheeny bosom seen,
Since dimpling in her mother spring,
Such winsome, bright, and lovely thing
As she who rode her silv'ry tide,
A youth her peer, herself beside.
The old man pushed them to the mouth
Of that same creek, whose tide in glee,
Came sparkling in the sun. The youth
Pointed Nell to the grand elm tree,
Spreading and tall, between whose feet
He found the maiden in her sleep.
She wond'ered that the place was bright;
The banks seemed to her wond'rous high,
Had seemed a place of endless night,
But beneath the morning sky
It smiled as bright as could be. "Yet—"
She stopped. With tears her eyes were wet.
They pushed beyond a mile or more,
And ran their prow upon the shore,
And Paul and Ellen from the strand,

Clomb their way to higher land.
And long before the noontide burned,
The maiden to the loved returned.
Needless as hard it were to tell
What between them there befell.
To Paul was it given to see,
That in that house of forest tree,
In Ellen's Aunt a lady stood,
As in herself were marks of blood.
It was a long, bright afternoon.

The three went to the sugar camp,
To Ellen's uncle, where too soon

Came the hour for Paul to tramp,
Across the wood to Indian Spring,
Where Stead before the boat did bring.

VIII.

THE DEPARTURE.

Of all things human it is strange
The power short time hath to change
The course of life; new life arrange.
Since yesternoon a simple child,
Tho'tless as child, went straying wild;
A youth by equal accident,
As sportsman on his game intent,
Strayed where the child exhausted lay,
And where ere morn she'd been the prey
Of savage beasts that near her stood,
Scenting and eager for her blood,
And bore her out to life and day.
Arise from this whatever may,
Is burden further of this lay.

From Indian spring to Gilbert's
It was surely some six miles.
'Twas much further as the crow flies,
Which seldom in a right line
Wings his way. Watch and be convinced.
All the long way (to young P. Lynn
Long or short as he was going
To see Nell, or from her turning)
Giant old trees stood in tall ranks;

Grand old whitewoods, splendid maples,
Lovely beeches, spreading elm trees,
Tallest ash trees, leaning basswoods,
With great hollows, making dens for
The largest bears; towering oaks,
Noble chestnuts—Oh, there never
Was a grander wild wood forest
Than this spread out. With the great trees
This young Paul Lynn got well acquainted
E're June came round. Hardly a day
That he did not pass them, one way
Or the other. The simple fellow
Made no secret of his liking
For the maiden, and his wooing
Was so tho'tful, for such young man,
That the good aunt saw quite plainly
'Twas his nature. Full of reverence,
Great forbearance, all the more so
That he had rendered such service
The child unto. To him it seemed
Like seeking pay, so he never
Sought to draw her from the presence
Of her aunt, who fully knowing,
Fully trusting his high nature,
Gave him license, as she thought best,
To take Ellen on excursions
To the river, to Indian Spring;
She only wished they older were.
Such days were never since poets
Of Arcadia their legends sang,
As these days were to young Paul Lynn
And Nell Maynard. Two or three times
Aunt and uncle with them went.

Very often the old hunter,
With Paul went through the forest,
And his Bible Nell read to him.
Always the book of his mother.
Essay several times the girl made,
To induce him to permit her
To teach to him the alphabet,
And so master the Bible text.
It was curious how the old man
Shyly evaded her offers, all.
He in his mind thought the Bible
Only could be read by Paul Lynn
Or Nell Maynard. That in his hands
Or another's, sure it would be
A book lifeless; lack God's spirit,
Which he devoutly was assured,
They breathed upon the holy word,
So it became oracle living.
In his own hands it would be cold
As a clod—dead, dull, and frozen.
The new world of love and brightness
To the young pair, ran on with June,
Leafy young June, month of roses.

There came one day to Indian Spring,
From the eastward, to Paul bearing
From his guardian, peremptory,
A letter curt he should return.
He hemed and hawed, walked round musing
For some days. No help came. He said
He was commanded by message
Which was binding, he must return;
Other reason gave he them none.

So one bright day, toward the evening
He stood with Nell on the wild strand
Of the river, near the elm tree
Where he found her that night bless'ed.
There no kisses, no embraces,
They merely held each other's hands,
Hands clasped closely, nothing more.
No vows were said, these words only
By Paul Lynn: "Just so surely
As the sunshine shall not fail you;
As this river shall forever
Running, run on, run forever,
As surely to you will I come."
Then he turned him, leaped the boat in,
And Stead rowed him down the river.
Ellen standing on the landing,
Looked him after until a bend
Of the river hid his form from
Her dewy eyes. Just at the bend
He rose and turned, and from his hand
He wafted back to her a kiss;
The first and only, then he vanished.
She then turned to aunt and uncle,
And they three clomb up the high bank,
River leaving, valley leaving,
Sad and lonely in the shadow,
Cold and lonely in the twilight.

PART SECOND.

IN THE HANDS OF THE WORKERS.

Very strange it is when we come to scan

What appears the scheme of this creation;
God furnishes things in the rough, and man
Works them up. That must be the relation
Of the two in this joint obligation
Of working up and working out the job.

A leading race brought forward, a nation
Is built up, men in whose race natures throb,
The genius to form themselves workers fit for God.

In their fitting, training, they never dream

They are doing His work. Men toil on, blind,
Not knowing what they do. Some petty scheme
For their own gain, narrow, some trifling find
That carries them on for a day, their mind
Intent on their own purpose, shrivelled, small,
But really do God's work for mankind,
And mankind's owner. Thus for both, for all;
But for Him finally, who doth the whole enthrall.

From this statement general one may draw
A subtler meaning, one high, refined.
All God's first handiwork is crude, bitter, raw.
He sends a skilled workman, who pours his mind,
His soul into them, and at once their kind
Are lifted up, perfected. This the law:
Take the dwarf, hard, sour, acrid crab-apple,
And behold the wonder, wrenched from the craw
Of nature. With what e'er man doth grapple,
He fights and surely wins for God and man a battle.

This was wrought out in every blade of grain,
Grass, plant, fruit, tree, brute. Whatever did
Man grasp with his mind, there was made great gain.
Where'er a rock, a clay, ore, coal, lay hid,
Or poison, or weed grew, there man was bid
To touch it with his recreating hand,
Lifting it, till no useless clod, or weed,
Or noxious thing should cumber all the land,
But in the great procession in due order stand.

The huge earth's self, whose surface man doth mar
And make, lies full within this mighty reach.
There's not a mountain ridge, wide desert, scar,
But as man's great needs his mind doth teach,
His hands strengthen, his soul uplift, shall each
Submission smiling bow, till over all
The wide domain extends, and every breach,
Made solid, full, and strong, in the great pall
Of man's lordship over the earth, under God's high
call.

Of all the material that can come
From God's hand, the rawest men surely are—

Abject, savage, abased; yet they alone
Can be to angels wrought, pass the bar
The worlds dividing. 'Twas for them the star
Which drew the the Magi from the East, afar,
Was lighted. Sure none shall be left abroad,
But grace to man, to weeds, to the great clod
Awarded, and all in time's fulness come to God.

To every thoughtful man his time is sad.
To us, this is one of wide backsliding;
Faith, foundations, all going to the bad;
From old truth all seem downward gliding,
Nothing in their places true abiding;
All the old garnered stores are squandered, lost;
No man gathering new, all men deriding
The well-known, grand methods of gain, God's cost;
Leave all things in a wide sea, to be forever lost.

God works not for any generation;
For many ages seemeth not to care;
Leaving them fallow in dead stagnation,
Rotting with certain decay; drifting where
Brood death and darkness, yet surely there
Are germinating the great seeds of time,
For new uprisings, which shall bear us far
Above all former summits. From the slime
Of dried up oceans, spring new continents sublime.

God vindicates himself to the ages;
For eternity he plans. For no man
Careth He. Mark loss and gain, the slender wages,
Measured by time, of working out the plan;
The eons of ages of this work scan;

Ere the ever changing earth did attain
Life, and from this, how many ages ran
Ere men. *Partial loss and greater gain,*
Is the great law of all, and ever shall remain.

II.

TIME AND CHANGE.

Five years may look short or very long,
Dependent which way the eye is cast.
Time is lengthy, to one looking on,
And very short when the time is past.

So, measured by the thing to be done,
Time is short, or as if never gone.
To him adjudged a day to die
Time is an hour already fled;
Time never can be made to fly
To him waiting his day to wed.

Five years given to change the earth
Is time very short for such a birth,
Transmute a weed or grow a State—
For a lover long time to wait.

My reader sees I'm growing quisical;
I'm nothing if not metaphysical.

Five years have passed the western wood,
And made it less a solitude;
New cabins planted in the shade,
And here and there new openings made,
The older large, and larger grown,
And backward hath the forest flown,

And more and more been made to yield
Place for the settler's stumpy field.
For rough the process is to view
The change from savage old to new;
To arts, to ways of civil life,
That change is one of war and strife.

The forming hand that would improve
Must first destroy. That is the law.

From the sour crab its limb remove
With the sharp knife, and leave it raw,
Until within the bleeding cleft,
Is placed the new scion, by the deft
Hand of Art. The wheat's tender sheen
Takes the place of forest green,
The apple follows the woody race,
The white lamb takes the fierce wolf's place,
The lowing cow succeeds the deer,
The lazy swine the hermit bear;
Where browsed the elk now feeds the ox,
The dog is there to chase the fox.
Only through destruction dire,
The chopper's axe, consuming fire,
Already roads and ways are made,
And bridges rude o'er streams are laid;
The bright Shagreen herself was crost
By fords, and o'er her tide was tost
A bridge, to which her bed of rock
Gave footing. She hath felt the shock
Of the stone hammer, heard the shout
Of the ox-driver, sturdy lout—
Of the rude workers all—the cry
From which the timid deer doth fly;
The laughter, oaths, the answ'ring call,

The axe resounding, and the fall
Of trees upon her wooded banks,
Losing there the stately ranks;
Her waters darkened by the stains
Of broken earth, and washing rains.

George Gilbert was a man of thrift,
His notions were all sharp and clear;
His make-up fibrous, of that drift
Of men wrought out for purpose dear
To God, when in time the rift
Did open. O'er the ocean drear
Did hie; the hand that led, did sift,
And mould, and try, till did appear
The pattern fit, men to make and lift
To higher levels; their schooling here,
Perfected for the special work.
Placed on New England's dreary shore,
Where the hard tasks no man could shirk,
Climate, soil, Indians, till o'er
And o'er the stuff in them was wrought,
Hammered, drawn out, compacted, fused,
Chilled, hardened, until the sought
Form was found. Oft tried and used;
Somewhat narrow—for there were drills
Needed; sharp—for there must be swords;
Condensed, weighty—for there were ills
The heavy hammer only kills.
Infused all through and over all,
The forming spirit, and the pall.
Supreme, the awful fear of God.

'Twas theirs to plant, build up a new
Race and nation. For them the rod
The hammer was, until the true
Fine fiber and right form appeared.

Ever true the old law remains,
Slow its movement, its process hard;

Partial losses for greater gains—

This is the price we ever pay;

Dark is the night for brighter day.

George Gilbert was of this new race,

For such its life school had made it.

His its soul, its form, its grace,

Faults, and limits. It hath laid its

Hand on its children for all time,

And eternity. Of this line,

His wife and Nell Maynard true,

And neighbors. Planted in the new

Generous soil, wild woods of the West,

Wide-stretching plains, great rivers free,

This type of men attain their best.

The come out, now, all men may see

Of this planting in Ohio's land,

Of George Gilbert, and all the band

Of his race. They gave her to stand

At the head of the Republic, and

The heart, soul, fiber, they gave the State,

As they made, so shall keep her great.

Of his own state, George only thought;

In these five years, had only sought

To enlarge his own little world,

And backward his strong hand had hurled

The wall of trees that round him stood,

Where he had made his footing good,

And never thought in all his toil
Of mingling man's soul with soil;
And crab-apples, things in the raw,
The outside form was all he saw.

His wife was of a finer strain,
Of long New England clergy line,
Of culture, soul, and fiber fine.
Traits long inherited remain.
Of George's thrift she was the soul.
His hand strong, rough—her's divine;
As did from his the forests roll,
Her's followed after to refine,
Save young trees to shade the spring,
Plant flowers and shrubs, trail a vine,
Throw over all the nameless thing
Which woman's hand alone can fling.

III.

SPELL OF THE FOREST.

Endless the goods of the grand old wood,
To those who know the store,
Hidden in its peopled solitude.
Its treasures wild explore,
You will find it ever doth make good,
To those who know the core,
Its charm and endless variety,
Sweetness wild, without satiety.

On whom hath been laid the mighty spell
Of the wood, its spirit,
Drank deeply, her wild heart knoweth well,
And loves to draw near it;
Her flavor her pungency can tell.
One who doth inherit
The soul and life that there find home,
Ever longs in her wild ways to roam.

Her soul subtle, is elusive, shy,
A flavor felt, unseen,
Yet her children walk it ever by—
Haunts every tree and stream,
Giving her solace to all who fly
To her, a living beam

To all her dear ones who live therein.
In her heart no evil, shame, or sin.

His day's task done the border boy
Runs to her with a cry.
With gun or rod the youth with joy
From the cabin hurries by
Her margin to her depths; the maiden coy,
May there meet lover shy.
Endless resource the great resort,
Of all who may with her consort.

Forever in the heart doth linger
The spell she there hath laid
Never to be broken. Her finger,
Writes in the soul that strayed,
In nature strong, that once did bring her
Devotion; who her shade
Hath loved, remembrance never to change;
Love, which nothing ever can estrange.

Remembering I sit and close my eyes,
And lo! a mighty wood
Tosses its green billows to the sky's
Measureless solitude.
In me the old longing doth arise,
Again there to intrude.
There with sister, brothers, raise glad cries
And shouts, play there as we once played,
Its children wand'ring undismayed

Earth no more can bring me such day.
Memory is all that's left.
Ax and fire swept that wood away,

And time hath from me reft
The loved. Where the pioneer held sway,
The stranger's hand hath cleft
Their homesteads. The loved names are gone,
Sculptured their burial stones upon.

Now Ellen was a real child
Of the forest—that is to say,
While she was not so very wild,
She had become in her sweet way
To all its subtle charms alive;
Felt in her pulse the weird play
Of its spirit, knew where it did hive
Its secrets, and all its sweets contrive.

Stead had many secrets told her
Of the forest, of the wild ways
Of its wild children; would hold her
By the hour, in the pleasant days;
And she had many sweet places
Wherein she held a sylvan court;
Dear hidden nooks, where the graces
Of the greenwood seemed to resort.

And she, this Ellen of the wood,
Had grown in beauty, as in height;
As sweetly wise as she was good;
Swaying by the unconscious right
Of virgin charm, as now she stood,
Undreaming, it in all men's sight,
Of maidenhood the paragon,
Sweet, simple, tender, brave and strong.

A subtle and elusive spirit,
Like the aroma which the dew
From wood foliage doth inherit,
At twilight's coming, which she drew
With the breath of wild violets,
The fragrance which the wood begets,
Breathed from her lips, surrounds her form,
Like perfume, a most potent charm.

At Indian Spring old hunter Stead
Found shelter for his whitening head.
Years have bent that giant form
That never bent to foe or storm.
He keeps his gun, he sets his traps,
Sometimes kills deer, takes water rats,
Sees clearings new, new rising smokes,
No more shuns men, he even brooks
Them at his hut. Oft to Gilbert's door
He goes, and talks forever o'er
The days and feats of young Paul Lynn,
And wonders what hath hap'd to him,
Shakes his old head and heaves a sigh,
Then looks away with dimming eye.
Four years before there came to him
A very strange, much talked of thing;
A deed of all the Indian Spring-
Tract, due recorded to him came;
John Westbrook, the grantor's name.
Save that, to him no other word,
No other on the deeds record.

Strangest of all the old man thought,
Some others also thought the same,
That in these years no rumor brought

A whisper of the young man's name,
Since that hour when the river's bend
Cut him off from Ellen's sight.
To her no message did he send,
Token, or word, however slight;
To the old man that seemed the end
When that sad day with night did blend.

Yet ever as he told the child
The doubt, unrest of his old heart,
For answer made, she brightly smiled,
As in his fear she had not part.
None had she. To her was given
Love, and trust. She'd never striven
With doubt. Hope and faith entire one,
Reigned in her heart and soul alone.

IV.

NELL'S FIND.

These five years. Well, five years that June,
A very funny thing befell.

(That is,—funny enough to tell.)

Late it was in the afternoon,

Near nightfall, as I remember well;

Twilight—which the Scotch call gloaming.

Night was coming in the wood,

Through which Nell had been roaming

With her thoughts; liking solitude,

Just then, and half a mile or so

From home, and quite near that same creek.

Thinking of that time, long ago;

The forest there was without break;

There an old trail its way did take,

Across the creek, near a mire place,

Which it went round, making a trace

Through to the river, where a ford

Gave crossing to the other side—

An old road leading the good Lord

Knew where. Nell knew it to the tide

Of the not far distant Chagrin;

Walked it first that day, with Paul Lynn.

Well, as I just now was saying,

The child was there idly straying.

When a curious noise she heard,
A startling noise, not any word
Uttered by a man or woman,
Yet certainly it was human.
It startled Nelly very quick.

A smothered-gurgling cry of pain,
Which ended in a long-drawn groan
That frightened. Then it came again,
Followed by a distressful moan,
As one dying. I said Nell was brave,
And also that she was alone,
And at the coming on of night,

The blood rushed in upon her heart,
And then a loud clear call she made.
"Who is there," and did forward start,
And on the bank in the dim light

Saw a dark mass, as something laid,
In and on the mire place. Her sight
Was at fault, and again she cried:
"What is it?" and there to her came
Response. Then she knew a man
And horse were there; the man involved,
Both sinking. The thing to be solved
Was his instant rescue; and Nell
Saw it all—saw the way as well.

She picked up and threw much green brush,
Thick and strong on the miry mush,

Which on trial her did upbear,
On which she bravely made a push

To the smothered, helpless man. There
She raised his head, and freed a hand,

But had not strength to draw him out.
Not two yards on the bank did stand

A well grown sapling, lithe and stout;
She sprang to—clomb—and with her weight,
Bent it down and within the clasp
Of his freed hand. With the might
Of both, pushed to the utmost gasp,
They gained for use his other hand.

With the added force and hope anew,
The two with a great effort drew
Him from that pit, to the hard land,
Where gasping, strangling, yet breathing,
Him of the foul mass relieving,
They made way to the running creek,
Where when well washed he could speak.
His real injuries were slight,
Beyond taking vile earth and fright;
He thought he'd seen his last of light.
Quite soon he felt himself refreshed,
Then turned they to the horse enmeshed.
The small tree was bent down again,
When with halter, and bridle rein,
The poor thing's head was made secure.

For breathing; all that could be done,
To make his life for the time sure;
And then they left him there alone.

But when he found that they had gone,
Were stealing from him fast away,
He raised a most imploring neigh,
Ellen turned, to him ran back,
Patted his head, and kissed his neck,

She told the man by him to stay,
And she'd bring help and take him out.

She flew where at work that day
Were with her uncle three men stout.

—Well, they got him out.
Sure that is all I need to tell;
Shouldn't have said that, but for Nell.
The man was washed and put to bed,
The horse was washed and put to shed.
(Of this whole thing I'm awfully tired;
Will never have another man mired.)

V.

JOHN EXPLAINS.

John Westbrook was the stranger's name—

 Name in the deed to hunter Stead—

From New England. That day he came

 From Warren, through the woods he said:

Crossed the river, coming that way,

Passing the creek at close of day

His horse plunged in—both were mired.

Miserably he had there expired

If to him brave, heroic Nell

Had not come. Then he tried to tell

His gratitude; and did it well.

 A middle-aged gentleman,

As one could see; well made and strong.

 He watched Nell, every act did scan,

Every motion and look, as long

As she remained within his sight.

He'd been shocked, strangled—in the night

He had a fever, then a chill,

 And a doctor, when came daylight,

And was kept there quiet and still.

Early he sent off to Warren

A man, who took a letter for him.

Next day, toward eve, a youth arrived.

 Nell was out. When John heard her come

(The thing John Westbrook had contrived
That these should meet within his room)
He called her. There the light was dim,
Nell came brightly, tripping in.
They felt each other more than saw.
With a glad cry she sprang to him;
He clasped her close, as is the law
Of love. The clasper was Paul Lynn.
She was the first of them to speak,
And lifted up her shining head,
With the glad tears on either cheek,
"O, I knew you would come," she said.
His heart so full no utterance made,
Save tears and that embrace. His heart
Was true as beats in man's bosom.
Men are true as women. The part
They play in truest love does 'em
As much good as it does them.
The true law of love—hearts for hearts,
Women and men are counterparts;
Yet equal halves of a perfect gem.
Nell's aunt and uncle both were by,
As happy, glad as they could be.
"Dear, dear soul!" she could only cry,
Scarcely less blessed than was she.
She turned to John, and with her eye,
This question asked, "How can this be?"
John Westbrook sat up in his bed,
As glad as either. This he said:
"If there was wrong in their separation,
The fault, as now the joy, was mine.
Sure I've made some reparation
By falling in that filthy slime."

Very properly he paused here,
And wiped from either eye a tear.
The memory of that beastly mud
At that blessed moment would intrude.

“ He's my dead sister's only child;
His bachelor guardian was I.
He largely owned this region wild,
And came to see it. Here he whiled
Some months. You know what happened. My
Answer to his letters, strong and long—
(Paul, it you should have put more rough—
Of this brave and glorious Nell);
Seemed to me, well—hum—merely stuff.
(That was, you know, before I fell.
Adam's fall—not to be hasty,
Tho' great, was not half so nasty).
My reply was an order sharp
To return, by special bearer sent.
He dallied, lingered, but did start,
Leaving his heart here. Well, I lent
My full ear to his story wild,
And much it moved me toward this child.
This was what I imposed on him :
Five years of absence, of silence five.
If at the end there was a glim-
Mer of his passion yet alive,
With him I would go to this West,
And if I found the maiden true
And good (Nell, I didn't know you,
You know, then) I would see him blest.
I made him stay behind. Alone
I came to see. Old stupid fool !

To see and judge this peerless one !

So blind, I tumbled in the pool
The first thing. She pulled me out,
Like that venerable John Snout."
Here he paused and feebly laughed,
As he thought of the mud he quaffed.

" Well, on the whole I'm rather glad
It happened as it did—mud bath
And all. The tyrannic uncle bad
And badly punished, one thing hath
To ask. It will perfect Paul's bliss.

" Let me now see you join your lips,
In rapture as true lovers kiss."
Those lips up there in that said line
Must stand alone without a rhyme,
While each lover the other's sips.

Then they sipped the aunt's Bohea,
And sparkling words they idly spoke,
Nothing meaning, mere bright bubbles,
Filled with their blessed heart's troubles,
Which gaily at the surface broke.
I declare I've lost self-control
Along here; also of my lines.
Up there, still standing the good aunt's tea,
As any one can easy see,
Cooling alone, in its small bowl,
Without reason as without rhyme,
The thing has happened on a time
Before. My rhymes will drift apart,
While the lovers draw near each other's heart.
(That last line is fully ten feet long,
I must manage this, or cease my song).

VI.

THE WHIP-POOR-WILL'S SONG.

Again up spoke damp John Westbrook,
Outspoke very strange words to Paul;
As from the window he did look—
“Lo, outside, soft the moonbeams fall;
And softly breathe the airs of June.
Go out, you are the world to each;
And leave me here to sing a tune
To these kind ones, so they may reach
Some knowledge of you.” So they went,
Not loath to meet John's good intent.
Nell wondered at the shy unrest,
The timid coyness of her breast,
The tremors sweet, which through her ran;
As her heart said “this is a man.”
Before he had seemed half a child;
A girl-faced, lovely, hero boy,
Brave, tender, of spirit wild,
Given to be her love, her joy.
But this, a virile man, a thing
To which with precious fear to cling.
No not fear—she could not define
Nor try to; more than half divine,
Yet of the earth, unconscious veiled
And to remain until revealed.

So they went forth to June's soft air,
And were themselves the glory there.
Whether the stars were suns or moons,
And if birds sang, were crows or loons.
O blessed is the hour of earth,
When the bliss of heaven hath birth.
Then and forever do men know
That what lights up the world below
Comes from heaven, and heaven is.
That is the proof and that is bliss.
The air was trembling with the thrill,
The weird notes of the whip-poor-will,
They smote out with cutting crash,
The stroke of a melodious lash,
That cut down through summer leaves,
Where the soul of night plaints, and grieves,
And gushes all her wild anguish,
Ever doomed to 'plain and languish.
The bright eyed thing peeped through the leaves,
And in the moon the lovers saw;
And softer his wild note he breathes,
As if he too there felt the law;
And as his strains went running on,
Something came into his song.
"Whip-poor-will, who are these
Standing there 'neath the trees?
Whip-poor-will, I declare!
Whip-poor-will, they lovers are,
Standing close over there.
Whip-poor-will, how funny,
These humans are to see.
Whip-poor-will, it was bad,
For the old one to put years

Between them, years so sad.
Whip-poor-Paul, full of tears,
Whip-poor-will; I'm glad he fell
Whip-poor-John, into the well.
Whip-poor-will, good that Nell
Came along, so brave to tell.
Whip-poor-will, how they thrill !
Whip-poor-will, how they bill!
Whip-poor-will billing, cooing,
And all sort of that wooing,
Quite well they are doing;
Whip-poor-will, very well.
Whip-poor Paul, *Whip-poor Nell*,
You are safe, I will not tell,
Whip-poor-will, to the moon,
But to-morrow to the loon
When I see him at the river,
Of the kisses he doth give 'er,
Whip-poor-will, O how shy.
Whip-poor-will, by and by
You will find your red lips,
Ready give as take clips.
Whip-poor-will, *Whip-poor-will*,
Now I will fly away
To my mate; then our flight
Will be back. Till the day
I'll sing to her all night.
She will see these two dear,
And we will watch them near,
And in the morning light,
Will send the thrush with his gush,
All things hush him to hear;
He shall come to make cheer.

Whip-poor-will, and good night.
Whip-poor Paul, *whip-poor* Nell,
Love her Paul, love her well."
Uncle John, he sent them out,
And long before they came in,
He wondered what they were about,
And came to show a little grim.

VII.

THE OLD HUNTER.

Our next morning at George Gilbert's
Was like a dawn in Paradise.
Lovely flowers, trailing vines,
Round the large cabin, over it,
Over the tree stumps; the short grass,
Sweet and tender, in the sunlight
Shone like amber; all the young leaves
Had the warm tint, which true artists
Never do stint. There went the lazy
Drone of bees, already laden
For the tall trees, where their hives were.
The air was freighted with perfume,
June's sparkling air in full goblets,
With life's elixir bubbling over.
Every grass-blade, every leaf-edge,
With great beads hung, blazed with diamonds;
From every tree-top, from the margins
Of the forest came swell of song
In full chorus. Each bird singing
As if compelled to his utmost,
Then could scarcely himself hear.
From the wood margin at first light
Came hunter Stead. Paul Lynn's warning
Had reached him, and this morning

He was the first of human things
That stole on the charm, which lay warm—
Lay on the clearing, walled with trees.
The old scout still having in him
The wild spirit of the forest.
The wild stock was only budded,
Not cut and grafted the second year,
But when full grown in his old age,
Some sweet buds by Paul and Ellen,
On his old shoots, where they blossomed,
Giving fragrance wild and pungent,
Like arbutus under dead leaves,
Under white snows in early March.
Long in the margin of the wood
Stood the man, the old world viewing,
To him so new; so newly planted
In the wild heart, of the savage
World of Nature old. As he stood
Thus viewing, the subtle meaning
Of the All Father to him came.
With pure rev'rence the old hunter,
As in presence, presence stronger,
His cap lifted from his gray head,
And turned him back to the wild wood,
As if of that he was a part.
As if his moc'sin did intrude
In this new world, to God nearer.
Then came to him old and lonely,
In this also he had some part,
Though not of it, he had in it
Things the dearest to his old heart.
Heart old and withered, till refreshed
By God's dear grace, brought into it,

By the young hands of these precious.
So reassured, he went forward,
Noting all things, each sign scanning,
Of the great change he saw working,
From the raw world of God's Nature,
To the new world of God and man.
And some dim notion of the plan
Dawned in his old heart—heart of child.
Nature he saw was far richer,
And fair with aid of human art.
These things pond'ring, great things, deep things
He went on noting, where tree stumps
Were decaying, making rich soils;
There 'mid their roots, still did linger
The wood's children, sweet wild flowers,
Growing stronger, richer, better,
Higher, larger, by chance culture
Thus received. He also noted
How gen'rous nature with her growths
Made speedy haste to hide, adorn
The ruin wrought in the great change.
This he pond'red, thought it over,
Felt himself a ruin hidden
Felt himself beautified, adorned
By the hands of Paul and Ellen.
To him Paul Lynn a wonder was,
So strong, so tall. In all a man,
With a man's port, marked, fine, high brow,
So strongly cut, head borne so well,
Yet free and joyous as the boy.
And when each by the other stood,
Paul and Ellen, he saw how each
The other gave completion, added

To what before seemed perfection,
Ellen borrowing much from Paul
By contrast and comparison,
Yet giving more than she received,
The prerogative of woman.
John Westbrook a sore puzzle was;
He the man was who gave him land,
So nominated in the deed,
On which he could keep trees growing,
A small domain of wild wood green,
Cover for deer, all wild things dear.
A mystery 'twas, came from the East,
Whence all myst'ries. It was a man
After all who did that strange thing,
And this the man, before whom now
He was standing. Vaguely he felt
That something from him, Stead, was due
To John Westbrook. He stood confused.
Powerless to form and utter speech,
Say what should be. Forth, laughing, Paul
Spoke, making plain that 'twas from him
Came the woods and streams. Stead asked him
Where they should go when he should cease?
"O to the deer, to the wild things
Let the forest be dedicated."
Up spoke Westbrook, naively saying:
"To Nell's children, dedicate it."
Then shy, bachelor being, blushed,
Yet not so red as in Nell's cheeks
The roses flamed. Paul Linn laughed,
And louder George, while the dear aunt
Kissed the girl, no wise offended.
Such lodgement made this in the mind

Of the hunter, that no rest came,
Till writing, assuring was made.
That was wonder to him, also,
A rustling page with strange dark lines
And his proper cross, transferring
A mile square of forest, and streams,
Valley, river, all that pertained,
To Ellen for life; her children
After, forever. So it ran.
He pondered, wondered, till 'twas clear,
Then had the old man great content.

VIII.

JUNE DAYS.

'What wondrous days were those June days,
They can come but once on earth.
Old Time is young, and himself stays
To watch over the new birth,
Between these hearts, joy sings her lays
With a fresh and endu'ing mirth.
All the wild, sweet things lend to them,
And of their treasures, send to them.

With them it was an endless now,
Tiding full lipped, enough for them
Its treasure. From their glitt'ring prow
Its drops fell pearls back to the brim.
They wanted nothing from the past,
From the future they nothing stole.
The lucious now was in their clasp,
Filling the head, the heart, the soul,
And so joy was complete and whole.

They went to all Nell's forest seats,
Sanctuaries some, some retreats,
Some were walks winding through the glades,
Some where the stoired religious shades,
Shed down a deep cathedral gloom,
Where rose arched, the mighty dome

Of grand trees high, and dimness made
All day; where sunbeams never played
At noon; where birds did never sing,
But only flashed on hasty wing.
She had seats on moss-grown banks
Of sunny knolls, where the tall ranks
Of leaved trees a sweet pleasance made,
Where the hermit thrush's song,
Came throbs of music, overlaid
By silence all the live day long.
Where the wimpling creek went brawling,
Limpid in its sparkling stretches,
And on land and stream came falling
Flecking light and shade in matches
Of molten gold, and lovely brown;
Sun-spilt from goblets dripping down,
Dripping, trickling through the leaves;
Fluttering, fanning in the breeze;
Lighting with a lambent flame,
Shrub, plant, flower, where it came,
On pebble white or mossy stone,
O'er which waters with laugh and moan,
Ever with their liquid voices,
As their heart is sad—rejoices,
As sad or gay currents run,
Ever and on in shade and sun.
Often here did Paul and Ellen
Linger; he asking, she telling
How in the years had passed her life,
Yet ever plainly as he saw
How her young spirit, eager, rife
For companionship did draw
Largess from the forest. The trees

Became her friends. 'Twas passing strange
How much she made them. By their leaves
She knew them—their bark, at great range
She knew them. Knew all their names,
And loved them. They to her alive
And sentient were, seemed to wave
Welcome. Tossing their leaves like manes,
Beckoning her. The birds she knew,
Their seasons, when away they flew,
Their notes, and where they built their nests,
And much she told Paul in their rests,
He asking, when no more she'd say,—
When teased would color, turn away,
He told her how with him had run
All the long years, what he had done,
Mostly with Fearne, Coke, and Blackstone,
He'd spent his time. All much drier
Than trees and birds, the things by her.

One day down to the bright Chagrin,
Down that old forest trail they hied.
There Stead with boat awaited them,
And they went floating down the tide.
It was a wondrous perfect day,
The sun with stream and forest vied,
Every bird piped his roundelay,
The light did with the water play,
As down they took their shining way.

There where young Nell's life was stranded,
And launched upon a brighter stream,
This sweet morn the lovers landed;
There standing, to them it did seem

A vision of the past, branded
By fancy; a strange, precious dream.
The old elm's trunk Stead had banded
With clematis, and running vine,
Wild roses and sweat eglantine.

And so down where the Indian Spring
Its waters cool doth ever spill,
With plaint, as there a prisoned thing,
The sadness of its breast doth trill,
Not all sad, but at times doth fling
A half-glad note of older song,
The Indian mother 'plaining still,
The soothed pappose low laughing on.
To Paul and Ellen came a thrill
As they stood there in silence long,
In silence clasped each other's hand
Then turned their mutual eyes, and—

IX.

ALONE.

O, dear, my little tale was done
Some time ago, yet I linger
Toying, loth to depart; as one
Who would gladly have the finger
Of time turned backward. The singer
At least is pleased with his own song
And with the bright ones would prolong
His idle strains, his useless stay;
Ere from his sight they fade away.
In upper sky though day is warm,
In wooded depths the weird charm
Ever wrought when day is leaving,
Unseen fingers now are weaving.
So from us doth fade at last
The present to the storied past

There came a day in this same place,
For which some other days were made.
I scarcely might have hope of grace,
Did I leave that day overlaid
With silence. Each lovely face
Would darken, leaving me in shade,
If not prolonged my simple lay
Until the light of that blessed day.

A day of summer's ripest noon,
And at the noon of summer's day,
From North, South, East, and West, there came
Through the forest, each by such way
As he had, in troops or alone;
Most on horses—from Cuyahoga,
The fair young city of Cleveland,
There came a bright and lovely band.

Fair Burton from her famous hill,
And the more distant Warren sent,
And Parkman, through the forest still,
Painesville her men and women lent,
All trooping to that Indian Spring,
Eager to see the wondrous thing,
The peer of which the bright Shagreen
In all her course had never seen.

Some in boats on the river came,
Some from the north, some from the south.
There was a town the river's name
Then bore, high standing near her mouth,—
All hurried through the sun and shade,
Gathering in the small area,
Where deft and ready hands had made,
Things in order due, to see a
Noble pair stand side by side
And lovely Nell become a bride.

The Indian woman's little field,
Which the sweet grass did cover,
Under the shade its space did yield,
Fragrant with perfumèd clover,

And many flowers, balm, and thyme,
White clematis and eglantine.

There was the sweetest fairy dell,
Carpeted with soft moss and grass,
Where cunning hands had woven well,
The bridal bower; thence did pass
The bride arrayed in simple white,
With her groom to the fair place
Assigned in all eyes, and God's rite
Reverently done, with the full grace
Of church, 'neath sky, and in the face
Of the dimpling, shining river,
That did its benediction give her.

There was a glorious festive hour,
Of joyous words, joyous voices,
And laughter, the full bright flower,
When man's heart and soul rejoices.
Then the westring sun did lower,
Through the high trees, and all was done.
The guests went off as they had come,
And Paul and Ellen they were gone.

The gray old hunter stood alone,
In the stilled valley. The weird tone
Of closing day was coming down
On the bright river. There were none
Save shadows with the old man thrown,
On memories, that long would thrill;
And through the valley lone and still,
Came the note of the whip-poor-will;
And plaining in the Indian spring,
The Indian mother murmuring.

ms

DUKE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



000125490L

